

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: White-tailed Deer
Region: 1
Hunting District: 130
Year: 2019

- 1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Eliminate the either-sex white-tailed deer season the first week and the either-sex white-tailed deer season valid on private land only the last week. Establish a buck only season for the general five-week hunting season.

- 2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The previous two winters have been severe, with deep snow and cold temperatures resulting in decreased deer recruitment. Hunters have expressed concerns about an observable decrease in deer numbers and a reduction of adult bucks in HD 130. The objective of this proposal is to reduce harvest pressure on adult does to increase recruitment in the Swan Valley.

- 3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.**

Success will be measured by the annual big game harvest survey conducted by the Department to document a substantial decrease in antlerless harvest.

- 4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Spring green-up surveys are conducted annually in HD130. These surveys primarily provide information on recruitment of fawns. The observed recruitment decreased from 53 fawns/100 adults in 2016 to 25 fawns/ 100 adults in 2018 (Table 1). The last 2 year's recruitment suggests a declining population. Furthermore, the 2018 indicated a declining trend in total population numbers. During the 2018 hunting season, the number of antlered bucks checked through the Swan Valley hunter check station was also dramatically less than in previous years.

Table 1. White-tailed deer survey and classification data for the Swan Valley, HD 130, 1977-2018.

Year	Survey Date	Adults	Fawns	Uncl	Total	Fawns per 100 adults
1977	March 16	59	29	0	88	49
1980	March 26	66	33	0	99	50
1982	April 5, 7, 19	456	144	3	603	32
1998	March 18, 25, 31	69	28	18	115	41
1999	March	220	183	50	453	83
2000		132	84	0	216	64
2001	1-Apr-19	129	77	28	234	60
2002		102	90	0	192	88
2003	19-Apr-25	269	127	34	430	47
2004	April 17-19	330	169	60	559	51
2005	April 26-29	407	208	54	669	51
2007	April 24-26	504	232	27	763	46
2008	April 30, May 2, 5	669	255	0	924	38
2009	April 17-21, 23, 25-26	874	174	116	1164	20
2010	April 15-26	913	234	5	1152	26
2011	April 27-30	970	274	0	1244	28
2012	April 30 - May 3	524	265	0	789	51
2013	April 25 - May 1	810	367	16	1193	45
2014	April 25-28, 30	860	340	39	1239	40
2015	April 30, May 1-2, 4-5	410	124	53	588	30
2016	April 18 - 22 April 30 -	510	272	88	869	53
2017	May 4	682	242	48	973	35
2018	May 4-8	539	138	50	727	25

5. **Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

The majority of this hunting district is public land with excellent hunter access. Winter severity has a significant impact on white tailed deer in this area, which receives regular deep snows and cold temperatures. In addition, predator density further impacts deer recruitment.

6. **Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

On the night of January 9th, the region one wildlife staff held a public meeting to discuss deer management and hunting regulations in Region 1. The vast majority of the people attending this meeting wanted to see this regulatory change enacted.

Submitted by: Jessy Coltrane, Area Wildlife Biologist

Date: 14 January 2019

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: